

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

CLOSE-UP REPORT

MARCH 1995

Election Day 1994 was the day wildlife won! In a stunning and historic achievement, voters approved two animal-protection ballot measures: Oregon voters restricted bear and cougar hunting across the state, and Arizona voters banned steel-jaw leghold trapping on public lands. And The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)—dueling with the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other pro-hunting and pro-trapping organizations—was the primary national organization backing both measures. Powerful pro-hunting and pro-trapping forces have long used money and scare tactics to prevent states from adopting humane wildlife policies, but when it came to 1994's

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WILDLIFE WINS AT THE POLLS

ROTTEN HUNTING

While twenty-seven states permit bear hunting, only ten allow the despicable form of hunting known as bear baiting. In the weeks before the spring and fall hunting seasons start, baiters litter the woods with piles of animal carcasses, pizza, jelly doughnuts, grease, and other foods to attract black bears, who are ravenous in the spring (after a long period of hibernation) and in the fall (when they are feeding for as many as fifteen hours a day to build fat reserves to allow them to survive the hibernation period). The bears smell the rotting food and begin daily feedings at the bait stations. When the hunting season begins, hunters simply shoot the unwitting bear at close range.

The HSUS believes that luring bears to bait stations and then slaughtering them is the moral and sporting equivalent of shooting a bear in a cage at a zoo. Colorado and Oregon are the latest states to outlaw the practice, and a lawsuit has all but eliminated the practice in Wyoming, but we must continue to fight in Alaska, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming if we are to see this rotten form of hunting dumped once and for all. ■



Shocking video footage of an actual bear hunt was part of The HSUS's successful campaign to ban hound hunting of black bears and cougars in Oregon. Treed by hounds, a bear is wounded and falls to the ground (insets, left), where he desperately faces the attacking dogs before being finished off by a hunter's bullet (inset, top right).

showdown, we—and the animals—won! The voters spoke in no uncertain terms: cruelty disguised as “sport” will not be tolerated.

In Oregon voters approved Ballot Measure 18, which bans the baiting of black bears by hunters, most of whom hunt merely for trophies (see sidebar, “Rotten Hunting”), and the hunting of black bears and cougars with hounds. Bear baiters typically litter the woods with rotting meat and fruit and other odorous foods and then shoot bears who come to eat the bait; hound hunters

release packs of dogs whose collars are fitted with radio transmitters, wait for the dogs to trap a bear or cougar in a tree, and then locate and shoot the treed animal at close range.

The Ballot Measure 18 initiative was launched in late 1993, after the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission rejected calls from wildlife advocates to eliminate bear baiting and the use of hounds in hunting bears and cougars. The efforts of an all-volunteer campaign amassed 90,000 signatures of Oregon voters with valid registration, enough to qualify the

measure to be placed on the ballot for the general election.

Opponents attacked Ballot Measure 18 with fury. Realizing that voters would not sanction either method of hunting as sporting or humane, Measure 18 opponents argued that these practices were necessary to control burgeoning populations of bears and cougars, which would threaten not only livestock and timber interests but also human safety. Led by the NRA and the Columbus, Ohio-based Wildlife Legislative Fund of America (WLFA), those working against Measure 18 mounted a massive advertising campaign designed to frighten voters into rejecting it. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) provided these forces with substantial help, taking

advantage of every opportunity to discredit the initiative, even though the ODFW, as a state agency, is precluded by state law from taking a formal position on ballot measures.

The HSUS countered with our own strong advertising campaign, using footage of actual cougar and bear hunts. Voters saw the truth and, in the end, rejected the scare tactics of opponents to Measure 18, despite the blitzkrieg of negative advertising.

This tremendous victory builds upon two other recent HSUS-backed victories against

In a historic first, Arizona voters rejected the further torture of animals on their state's public lands by the unspeakably cruel steel-jaw leghold trap.

hunting: California's 1990 ban on the trophy hunting of cougars and Colorado's 1992 ban on both the hunting of black bears during the spring and the hunting of black bears

with bait or hounds. It's clear the times are changing, as voters are finding their voices for wildlife.

ARIZONA IS THE FIRST

Arizona's 1994 vote on Proposition 201 delivered a historic first: a statewide ban on trapping on public lands (which comprise 83 percent of that state). Ban proponents swept to a landslide victory only two years after a similar measure had been defeated in the state. In 1992 the NRA and the WLFA led a \$1.7 million campaign to defeat the initiative, falsely charging that the measure banned all hunting and fishing, as well as trapping, on public lands. But in 1994 anti-trapping forces, with substantial financial and grass-roots support from The HSUS, qualified the measure to be placed on the ballot by gathering 190,000 signatures.

This time, with the supporters clearly indicating that the ballot measure banned only trapping and not hunting or fishing, voters brought in a decisive verdict. With editorial boards throughout the state declaring trapping to be the cruel and indiscriminate practice that it is (see sidebar, “Second Time's a Charm”), Proposition 201 was approved by a margin of 59 percent to 41 percent.

SECOND TIME'S A CHARM

Voters decisively rejected anti-trapping initiatives in Ohio in 1977, Oregon in 1980, and Arizona in 1992. Few imagined Arizona activists had much of a chance in 1994 when they attacked trapping again so soon after being defeated. But The HSUS did—and became the primary national backer of Proposition 201. The result was historic: for the first time ever, state voters approved a measure severely restricting trapping.

The results did not surprise The HSUS. Survey after survey has revealed that the public abhors trapping when the practice is fairly represented. Steel-jaw leghold traps and wire neck snares are two of the most brutal devices ever created by people to kill animals. Animals in traps or snares will often chew off their limbs to escape the clutches of these devices—a pyrrhic victory at best for the animal, who wins freedom by chewing through flesh, tendon, and bone. And the devices are as indiscriminate as they are cruel, trapping or snaring any hap-

less creature, bird, pet, or even child who unwittingly stumbles within their grasp.

The HSUS has long been committed to banning these tools of torture. Now, with 1994's successful Arizona campaign behind us, we intend to redouble our efforts. ■



What happened in November 1994 was a turning point for the future of America's wildlife. The passage of ballot measures in Arizona and Oregon sends a clear and unmistakable signal to state fish and game agencies that they can no longer pander to the wishes of trophy hunters and commercial trappers; these agencies must heed the wishes of citizens who want the states to implement more humane wildlife policies. It also shows that we can take on the NRA and the hunting lobby—and win. When The HSUS undertook the Oregon campaign, we knew we'd face the opposition's full might and muscle. True to form, the hunting lobby spent more than \$650,000 to defeat the initiative. But it was for naught. Oregon voters judged that there is no sport in shooting a feeding bear or a bear or cougar trapped in a tree.

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

For years even veteran activists had judged the initiative process to be a dead-end strategy. The hunting lobby—led by the NRA, the WLFA, hunter-controlled state fish and game agencies, and outdoor writers—seemed impossible to challenge: it had too much money, too much influence, and too much manpower. But 1994's remarkable wins have revived interest in the initiative process. Legal in twenty-four states and the District of Columbia, the initiative process was conceived and designed to ensure that voters would have a way to trump the actions of elected representatives and appointed commissioners who ignore or discount prevailing public sentiment.

The HSUS will continue its work with state legislatures and state fish and game commissions. But let them take note: when elected and appointed officials casually accede to the demands of the hunting lobby and ignore the public's interest in reform, The HSUS will not hesi-



Wildlife has gained protection in Oregon and Arizona, but the fight to protect wildlife continues. Please help us help the animals.

tate to orchestrate initiatives to effect long-overdue reforms—initiatives we will vow to win!

HELP US FIGHT WILDLIFE'S ENEMIES

Initiative campaigns are major undertakings, requiring extensive planning and major revenue. Hundreds of thousands of dollars and tens of thousands of signatures must be gathered. If The HSUS is to battle on this front, we must have your support.

Please give as generously as you can to help us in our fight to protect wildlife, and all animals who suffer indefensible cruelties. Mail your contribution in the enclosed envelope today! ■

A PERSONAL MESSAGE

Nineteen ninety-four was a banner year for initiatives. In Arizona the voters reversed their 1992 decision, voting to ban almost all trapping by the decisive margin of 59 percent to 41 percent. In Oregon, following a campaign led by Wayne Pacelle, HSUS vice president, Government Affairs and Media,

Oregon voters banned the baiting of black bears and the use of hounds in the hunting of black bears and cougars.

These wins represent not only stunning victories for The HSUS and other sponsors, but also stinging rebukes of groups such as the NRA and the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America. The victories are a testament to the voters of these states, who voted their heads and hearts over their fears.

Make no mistake: these were hard-fought, expensive wins. Initiative campaigns succeed only through a combination of research and polling, extensive planning, coalition building, tireless signature gathering, and diligent fund-raising. Initiatives hastily undertaken are all but certain to fail.

Initiatives properly conceived can deliver major victories for animals, as the recent wins in California, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon prove. The increased protection for cougars, bears, coyotes, and raccoons is emblematic of the power of the people, who can and will choose to protect animals when that choice is clearly and persuasively presented.

You can be a part of our efforts to help animals through initiatives, and a part of all the work of The HSUS. Your contribution enables us to continue our vital work; please use the enclosed envelope to send your gift today.

Paul G. Irwin
President, The Humane Society
of the United States



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